

BONFIRE NIGHT.

A STORY OF ST. JOHN'S EVE.

By T. M. HEALY.

No, little care I what gave rise to the honoured custom of bonfires on St. John's Eve, nor whether it be Christian or pagan; all I know is that its observance ever brought fun and frolic in its train.

Why should honest folk go cross-backing each other about the origin of these things? Sure they are for us now, and all that any well-affected person can do is to make the most of them, and enjoy the fun to his heart's content.

The present state of things then likes me well, and I am sure no such proposal for a change of date would find favour with right-minded people.

Down the dusty road, a score of Summers since, dropped in twos and threes the youth of Rathfarnham to the spot which from immemorial days had been sacred to the fires of the 23rd June.

"Mike, yer sowl, here's the sarjant," said the lad, and the crowd instinctively turned as he spoke.

"Divil make a corporal of him," said Mike, "and keep him on home service" as he dropped the light and looked up with a sigh.

With an airy assumption of carelessness he waited the coming of the constable, who rapidly drew near, big with fat and his own importance.

"What's this! what's this! what's this!" he cried in crescendo puffs of wounded horror, as he surveyed the scene.

"Why, the makings of a bonfire, to be sure! What else, St. John's Eve?" said Mike, quite unimpressed.

"Disgraceful! On the public highway, too!" "Well, and sure if it is where the public is passin' by, the more of 'em will see the fun," returned Mike, argumentatively.

"Hould yer tongue when yer takin' to me, sir!" cried the irate sergeant. "Don't you know 'tis illegal?"

"Wish, maybe 'tisn't much the worse o' that," rejoined Mike. "There's been bonfires in the country before there was any sergeants in it, and will be when they're all—colonels," he added, changing his mind about the last word.

"You'll light that fire at your peril, sir," roared the sergeant furiously.

"'Twill be a fire till it's lit," says Mike coolly; and 'I'll light it at my leisure, sergeant, avikyo, av' it's all the same to you."

"You'll suffer for this next court day, mark my words, you vagabone."

"Begor, some of us suffers every day we're courtin'," quoth Mike with a wink at the girls. "But 'tis a thing you got need to, sergeant avourneen."

The crowd laughed comically at their champion's banter, and some of the boys good-naturedly asked Mike if he was sure he had enough of matches.

"Some of ye'll sup bread and water for this," cried the constable, enraged at the idea of his authority being set at naught. "Here's Mr. Mahony's car coming, and ye'll be having the horse taking head at the blaze. Folly on."

"Me father's mere is blind," chirruped a tantalising voice from the girls standing round, to the exceeding discomfiture of the great man.

The crowd fairly roared at the retort, and leudly answered Mike's call of "Three cheers for Maureen and the mare," while Mike himself looked lovingly in the direction of the voice.

By this time Ned Mahony himself reached the throng, and as he drew up cheerily greeted the evil-doers with:

"More power yerselves, boys! I hope ye didn't stale mawch o' my turf this time. Blaze away, Mike av' houl more—what's stoppin' ye?"

"I'm surprised, Mr. Mahony, at a sensible man siding and abetting such conduct," interrupted the sergeant. "If there's a kipplin' lit there to-night every one of 'em will see the inside o' the county jail."

"Oh, blindlike, sergeant, are you there? Sure that'd be awful. Girls and all too! Dye hear that, Maureen—for I'll engage you're somewhere about?" "Would you like to be in the next cell to Mike Fijari?"

"Throth, palnal servitude 'ud be a diversion if she was," returned Mike. "'Tis we'd have the kiel on the threadmill together."

"Ah! thin, 'tis you'd be the comfort to any man's

daughter," laughed Ned. "But ye must do what the sergeant tells ye. 'Tud be poor work gettin' into jail for the sake o' such a thing, though God knows I thought they'd lave us our fun, if they robbed us of everything else."

"I'll never dance a step with a coward," cried the owner of the silvery voice that had answered the sergeant previously.

"Faith, I never doubted you, a colleen ru," cried Mike. "Dye hear that, Mr. Mahony?"

"Oh, than-go bra, Maureen—aisy talkin'! 'Tis the blood o' yer mother's child's soon up! Now look here, boys and girls, I'll tell ye what I'll do, rather than see ye bate. Put the matryals there in the cart, and ye can have a fine bawn for the dance, and make the bonfire on Lab-a-Kalye itself, where the Lord Lieutenant himself couldn't let or hinder ye if he 'd mind."

Well, I think some of those soft-hearted girls were sorry for the sergeant, but as he was, when they saw his face after the cheering of the crowd moderated a little, as he tried to gasp out word of remonstrance at this "misprision of treason."

In a twinkling everything was ready for transportation, and, as the rollicking procession formed after the cart, he shouted:

"You'll be sorry for this, Mahony! I'll report you to your landlord."

"Throth, thin, 'tis to a forgivin' man you'd go with yer story, avik. I'm me own landlord, sergeant darlin'. But you can tell me landlady, an' faith I'll leave Maureen's mother 'ud credit anything bad o' me!"

The poor sergeant! Though the girls weren't sorry for him that time; but the next moment, as the throng tore along in most admired disorder, they had clean forgotten all about him.

The place referred to by Ned was an old druidic altar, or cromlech not far from his own house, and on whose giant boulders, no doubt, many a fire, other than that now about to be lighted, had burned in sacrifice in the days of yore.

—bed of the hag—that was the famous spot. Beat beloved, according to the most authentic traditions, of all the erie tribes? Bound thy rude rocks, I can well believe, the potent charms have held their innermost councils, and sped, for good or ill, their chiefest messengers amongst the sons of men.

Weld and witching, it is true, were thine associations; but for all that in the popular mind thy stones were sacred, for they had looked upon an em of our country's greatness such as our eyes shall not see in these latter days.

A lucky man folks thought Ned Mahony—and Ned, too, thought himself—to have those ancient stones upon his bit of land; and often, in his evening reveries, as he regarded them from his door-step, did he mournfully turn his thoughts back to the pagan glories of the past, and sigh for a return of that olden splendour.

Many were the stories of buried treasure told in the neighbourhood in connection with the spot; but, respecting the traditional warnings handed down in the family from generation to generation, no Mahony had ever attempted to disturb by irreverent routings the foundations of the druidic pile.

But Ned did not regard the bonfire and its attendant merriment as any profanation of the place, though he was a little shocked by the unseemly conduct of Mike Fitzgerald, who, on reaching the spot in triumph, mounted on the huge stones with an unholy yell, and on their broad face went through the desecrating movements of a jig.

"Ah, thin, Mike fer boct," said he, "I wouldn't doubt yerself! That's a purty perch you've chose to dance a step on, an' air yer figure! You'd better make haste down, an' impt this load, or we'll be havin' some of these girls breakin' their necks climbin' up to you for a partner!"

"I'm comin' sir, good luck to you," replied Mike, "but we could never get the fire properly settled o' top of these stones up here, as you thought, an' I think if we just back the car to that big flat one below, 'till comin' us well enough."

"Very good, bouchiken; please yerself. That's yer soart," and in a minute the materials of the transplanted bonfire were arranged secundum artem on a broad boulder lying at the foot of the cromlech.

Defiant was the cheering as the flames shot up, and roared a loud confusion to constables and all other disturbers of the public peace, and great was Mike Fitzgerald's contentment to hear from the mouth of the "Historicus" of the party that without doubt it was the greatest blaze ever seen in the country since Sarsfield blew up the Williamsite guns at Ballyneety.

What sweet things Mike managed to say to Maureen that night in the dance! And what a charming glow her face took—though whether from the force of his words or simply the reflection of the ruddy firelight this deponent sayeth not.

But, anyhow, our pair settled the question between them that night; not, indeed, by a recourse on the one side to the vulgar process of "popping" it, but by other, finer methods, whereof, no doubt, a mere indication will be sufficient to the intelligent mind. And so the music of the spheres, although this muddy vesture of decay doth grossly close us in, was made audible in a far-off way to certain etherealized perceptions that St. John's Eve.

Ned Mahony, truth to tell, was not violently astonished to hear Mike's story as they walked homewards. "But girls have mothers, you know, Fijari, avik," said he, as if haply that inestimable possession might in the present case prove an insuperable obstacle to the fulfilment of his hopes.

"Thus for you, sir, good luck to 'em," said Mike bravely, in a tone which might either have implied he didn't think the worse of them for that, or else that there was no reason why he should permit this intelligence to dishearten him.

"Well, step up to the house to-morrow, avra," Ned added kindly, after ruminating some time, "and see what herself says. You were always a favourite with her, and our people and yours have been known to sich other this many a year; but ye'r young, Mike, ye'r young, and there's no 'casion to hurry."

Next day, with rather more misgivings than he could have thought possible twelve hours previously, Mike wended his way towards the scene of his last night's triumph. His reflections in the meanwhile had permitted him to see that those worldly belongings, of which he had not an over-bountiful share, would be more likely to be a surer recommendation to maternal prudence than the endowments which found favour with the daughter, and there was certainly something tremulous in his "God save all here," as he crossed the threshold of his beloved.

Alas! his forebodings were not unwarranted. True, it was only the necessity of delay that Mrs. Mahony urged in the kindest possible way, until his prospects would improve, or he could have a farm large enough for the dozen of cows (elegant milkers) which formed Maureen's portion, with a gentle deprecation of the hot haste of youth now-a-days (in her time people usedn't be in such a hurry to get their courting over); and though she wound up with a hope that before long (God is good!) everything would be happily settled, poor Mike could not conceal his disappointment.

In some confusion he left the house, and walked sadly down towards Lab-a-Kalye. Seating himself disconsolately on the rocks, he mournfully contemplated the ashes of the glorious bonfire, gloomily contrasting the black and dreary remains of the morning with last night's glowing blaze, and figuring this to himself as in some sort an emblem of the chilling blight and witherment of his young and rosy hopes.

For, with headlong impetuosity, he thought it monstrous in anyone to insist on this indefinite delay; and no doubt it is aggravating to be asked, in much the same tone as if it were a request just to wait a minute, to "have three or four years' patience!" In his agitated state, unable to

remain quietly inert, he sprang to the ground, and commenced with all the energy of impatience to scatter the ashes of the fire, with furious kicks, as a kind of relief to his feelings.

After thoroughly satisfying himself in this manner for some time, he noticed to his surprise, when the removal of the embers laid bare the blackened surface of the huge stone on which the fire had been made, that it was cracked and fawed in several places by the fierceness of the heat.

Now, there is nothing in the shape of a spleen-vent so soothing for a man in restless mood as an expenditure of force upon some object or another; and, with instinctive appreciation of this truth, Mike proceeded with a hearty good will to displace and overturn the great fragments of the stone.

No quarryman could work harder at a stubborn piece of rock partially loosened by a blast, no geologist hammer more vigorously in the excitement of a holy rage for specimens, no Babylonian explorer delve more furiously after lighting upon some gigantic image, than he laboured to rive hunder its unwieldy pieces.

Bit by bit he succeeded, and at last, toilingly upheaving the largest fragment, he turned, excited and curious, to see what lay beneath, as if he hoped to find some reward for all his pains.

He had not expected much, but he hardly regarded the discovery of a wealth of creeping and crawling things that slunk with tortured wriggle from the light of day, as a dazzling recompense for all his trouble!

There was therefore, I think, something of disappointment in the careless kick he bestowed on an old iron ring he noticed embedded below, with malicious intent to send it spinning out of the spot where it must have lain for centuries.

It was clearly a piece of putrelance, out of pure spite, perhaps, at the ugly looks of the villainous sample of verminoid encrusted around it. But the ring never stirred, and half-a-dozen other dogged though unavailing applications of his boot evidently showed vexation on his part.

"Begor, that's queer," said he, apostrophising it, as if he now felt himself "missioned" to root it up. "How stiff you are! But, faith, if you wer' fastened down as tight again, me rusty gorsoon, I'll have you out o' that before long, avikyo!"

Tug after tug he strained at it with little effect, till at last, clearing away the surrounding rubbish, he discovered it was attached to a smaller stone below.

"Hurrah!" he yelled, cutting a tremendous caper, "who knows but I'm comin' to something at last!" Seizing a stick he prized away at it, and succeeded in loosening the stone.

"Thunderanjer!" he cried, I wonder what it is. "Fayg-a-bolya wid you; come up here, you un-natural ould stone! Holy Moses! are you stirrin' at last?"

In his excitement he had not noticed Maureen come running up to him, and with a triumphant shout he wrenched the stone from its place.

"Why, then, avourneen, what's the matter?" said she. "I've been watching you all the time. Is it a crock o' gold you've found?"

"Is that you, achorra?" Thry yerself! what's below—I'm too wake to look," said he, turning his head. "Spake—is there anything?"

"Meyra, Mavira!" she cried, stooping over the cavity. "'Tis golden things uv all soarts is there! Look, Mike, look!"

But he didn't look. He looked at her, and threw his arms round her in joyous delirium.

"We're all right now, Maureen," said he. "They can't put us off after this."

"Talk o' crocks o' gold!" said Mike, when at length he was able to speak three words coherently. "I'd like to know where's the crockery or the chaney—ay, or the Imperor of Chaney, either—could bate this! Are they all out at last, Maureen, avorra?"

"Throth I'm not sorry, or else we wouldn't know what to do in' with ourselves at all at all!" "Oh dear! oh dear!" said Maureen; "I wish I could cry, Mike, only I can't."

Neither could Mike, though perhaps he did not try hard enough under the circumstances.

"Let us go in to your mother, allanna," said he. "What'll she think at all, in this wild world?"

Never before, as may be well believed, had store of such price passed across Ned Mahony's threshold, and never was there a scene beneath his roof like that witnessed as the heavily-weighted lovers set down their burden on the "dresser."

What a faith there was for them, and how poor Mike's downheartedness of an hour past seemed like the far-off oppression of some nightmare a thousand years ago. Well it might, my poor fellow! There is no thought now of having a dreary wait for a certain farm, big enough to be stocked by that dozen cows (elegant milkers), or of any wearisome delay upon the slightest pretext whatsoever.

So his joy was made full, and as he connected in his mind link after link of the chain of accident to which his blissful state was owing, down to the final rivet, golden-forged, he inwardly decided that a man may do many a worse thing than make a bonfire upon St. John's Eve.

TWO GOVERNMENT SPIES.

LEONARD MACNALLY AND BARNEY O'DUGGAN.

By MAJOR MCKERRERY.

The name of Leonard MacNally was formerly held in high estimation and always remembered in connection with the sayings and doings of Curran and other good Irishmen who, in the days of the '98 affair, stood forward as the advocates of the popular cause—or, at least, of those who tried to advance it in their own way.

After the death of MacNally, people came to know he enjoyed a pension; but the particulars did not come out till the publication of the "Cornwallis correspondence" and the "Secret Service" papers.

MacNally was always a prominent man on the patriotic side, and usually employed as counsel for all sorts of "rebels." He originally belonged to the Whig Club and the Society of the United Irishmen, and when any of the latter were in trouble they looked to him almost as confidently as they did to John Philpot Curran.

When both were together engaged in the defence of Finney, the latter counsellor threw his arm round the neck of his associate in court, and said, with great emotion: "My old and excellent friend, I have long known and respected the honesty of your heart, but never until this occasion, was I acquainted with the extent of your abilities."

The incident was rather a curious one, and would be natural enough if at that time there were any whispers afloat of MacNally's understanding with the government. And there were, very probably. The above mentioned "Secret Service" papers exhibit his initials in connection with the receipt or payment of money, from the date of 1797 to 1803.

In the latter year MacNally was so trusted by the patriots that he was employed as one of Robert Emmet's counsel, and made a very zealous fight for the life of the prisoner. It is surprising enough to find in the above Castle documents, under date September 14, 1803, the entry, "L. M., £100." MacNally visited his unfortunate client in prison, and took leave of him with a great show of affectionate emotion, on the morning of his execution. In the same year there is the record of, "Pollock, for L. M., £1,000."

In the year 1807, when the Whigs came into office, MacNally wished to be made King's Counsel, and Curran used all his influence with the Duke of Bedford, then viceroy, to help his friend. But his lordship steadily refused, for some reasons of his own; and MacNally never got his silk gown, which was looked on as a great grievance by the Irish Liberal Party. At this time, June, 1807, General Arthur Wellesley (afterwards Duke of Wel-

ington) wrote the following letter to Mr. Trill, an officer of the Irish government:

"I entirely agree with you respecting the employment of our informer. Such a measure would do much mischief. It would disgust the loyal of all descriptions, at the same time it would render useless our private communications with him, as no further trust would be placed in him by the disloyal." In another letter to Lord Hawkesbury, written in 1808, the same writer says: "The extracts of the letters sent to you by Lord Grenville were sent to us by —, the Catholic orator, two months ago. The — mentioned is a man desirous of being employed by the government as a spy, and his trade is that of a spy to all parties. He offered himself to Lord Fingal and others, as well as to us, and we now watch him closely."

These letters are believed to refer to Leonard MacNally, who had desired to connect himself with the government; and they very probably do—though there is no exact certainty of the fact. But there are certain enough in connection with his name—the records of government pay, and the regular pension of £300 a year which he received till his death in the year 1820.

MacNally was born a Catholic, and he turned Protestant to make his way at the bar. But he was still a United Irishman; and when Sir Jonah Barrington scoffed at the Society, he "called him out" and fired at him, according to the old Irish regulation. Sir Jonah, remembering this event, says MacNally was not very popular in society; but others have described him as a most agreeable companion, with something of the witty, lively way of his friend Curran.

The latter, we know, had a strong attachment to him; and W. H. Curran, in the life of his father, speaks of "the uncompromising and romantic fidelity" shown, in this relation, for forty-three years, by MacNally. Curran, in the biography alluded to, praises the many endearing traits of Leonard's character, and apparently has no suspicion of his connection with government.

Neither did John Philpot Curran appear to have any suspicion of it—which is strange enough. Charles Phillips, alluding to the report that MacNally had a pension, wrote: "The thing is incredible. If I were called on to point out, next to Curran, the man most obnoxious to government—who most hated them, and was most hated by them—it would have been Leonard MacNally; that MacNally, who, amidst the military audience, stood by Curran's side, when he denounced oppression, defied power, and dared every danger."

Human opinion and human testimony are in general very untrustworthy and very worthless things.

After the death of Counsellor MacNally in 1820 at the age of 68, his heirs claimed the reversion of the pension of £300 a year; whereupon Lord Wellesley asked for a statement of the terms on which it was first granted, and the matter became known.

Daniel O'Connell was as much surprised as most people; but he made use of the discovery in his own way, to discourage in Ireland anything like a secret conspiracy against the English government.

As for MacNally, the poor man disliked rebellion—and so did Curran, Grattan, and the rest. Leonard was for fierce parliamentary reform, not pikes; and no doubt thought it was "only right" to circumvent those who wanted to destroy the government. So much may be said in favour of the subject in hand, after the rule of most biographers. If I were writing the biography of Jefferson Davis, I would be apt to contend that he was not taken in a woman's dress, after all.

In the "Cornwallis Memoirs" there is a letter from Secretary Cooke to the Lord Lieutenant, in which he says: "Pollock's services ought to be thought of. He managed Mac— and MacGuicken, and did much. He received the place of Clerk of the Crown, and Peace, and has the fairest right to indemnification." The name thus omitted was, no doubt, Nally.

The "manager" above-mentioned was Attorney John Pollock, a well-known Dublin practitioner in his day. In 1786 he was solicitor to the Trustees of the Linen Manufacture. In 1795 he was Clerk of the Crown and Peace for Leinster, and Clerk of the Peace for Dublin. In 1800 he got the valuable sinecure of Clerk of the Pleas of the Exchequer.

These offices indicate that he was an active friend of the government, and the Secret Service papers show a great number of payments made to him at various times. The money was probably meant as payment for some of his under strappers; but much of it stuck to his own fingers. The sinecure office of the Pleas enabled him to spend £9,000 a year in a grand house at Mountjoy-square; and he enjoyed his magnificence for many years. This clerkship of the Pleas had been created for Lord Buckinghamshire, in order to reward his services in Ireland as Chief Secretary and other Services in India. The fees of the office amounted to about £35,000 a year for his lordship—Counsellor Pollock acting always as his deputy.

On the death of Lord Buckinghamshire in 1816, Sir John Newport brought the question of the clerkship before Parliament, and Pollock being summoned into the Court of Exchequer, to answer for the enormous abuses and extortions of his office, was found guilty and dismissed. This was in 1817; and in 1818 the old attorney died of disgust in very reduced circumstances.

Another of those men of '98 who worked underground for the government was a person named Bernard O'Duggan, who presents some curious flashes of biography. He was a native of Tyrone, and he finds a place in Sir Richard Musgrave's "History of the Rebellion," where he is represented as one of the leaders at the battle of Prosperous, riding about on a white horse, and boasting courageously—all the heroes of Homer boast, and so do those of the middle age romances, and some of the best of Walter Scott's men—that he was as good a soldier as the military commander of the district. He was indeed a bold and energetic fellow, and simply told the truth in that respect.

In a statement written by himself, subsequently, and presented to Mr. John C. O'Callaghan, author of "Green Book," O'Duggan says he and other rebel officers were induced to enter into a treaty with government, and accept an act of amnesty in 1798; after which he went to live at Palmerstown.

In 1803, when Robert Emmet prepared for a rising, O'Duggan says he was called on at Palmerstown by Quigley, who had just come over from France; by James Hope, of Belfast; and by Thomas Wylde; and induced to enter the conspiracy and join the others at the depot of arms in Thomas street. He mentions the names of several persons whose general duty was to collect into the depot the pikes made by smiths in various places, to manufacture cartridges, and make rockets.

O'Duggan, Burke, and Condon brought in the powder and balls from the different places, but for the most part from Hinckley's at the corner of Cuffe street, who was licensed for selling gunpowder, and got it from the government stores. So there was a great preparation, and all went well till the explosion of the depot in Patrick street." On this occasion O'Duggan, Burke, and Condon had been sent down to that place to get the rockets filled; but as things were not in readiness, they came away again about a quarter of an hour before the explosion occurred, blowing up several persons, two of whom died in Madame Steeven's Hospital.

Here it must strike anyone as something odd that the explosion and the killing of the men should have passed without notice or discovery by the government people. O'Duggan says that the accident hurried Mr. Emmet in his preparations; and adds that on the day of the outbreak the people from the country did not come in according to promise. "Dwyer was to come with his mountain battalions, and the Wexfords were to come in thousands; but none of them made their appearance up

to four or five o'clock, nor any account of them. None showed their faces but the men of the county of Kildare and part of the county of Dublin that lay adjacent. They came from Naas, Prosperous, and Kilkullen; a few from Maynooth and Leixlip, and from Lucan a few. Palmerstown turned out almost to a man."

O'Duggan goes on to tell how that evening Mr. Emmet sent him with a party to lie between the Castle and the barracks, and intercept any communication that might be attempted between them. At the same time, he says, Mr. Emmet intending to seize the Privy Council as they sat in the council chamber, sent Henry Howley to get six double coaches capable of carrying thirty-six armed men. Howley, coming in the first coach, saw a row between a soldier and a countryman, and, leaping out, joined the fray, and shot Cornet Brown on the spot.

In the confusion that ensued, Howley failed to get his coaches, and the Privy Council were allowed to sleep in their own beds that night. Such is the account of O'Duggan, who does not appear to have taken any part in the wild work that evening. He says he returned from his post after dark, and could see the soldiers stationed in some of the streets, and the pikes strewn along the ground where Emmet's people had flung them away. He escaped to Rathcoffey, where he saw several of those who were proclaimed and had rewards offered for them. He says, "Numbers were hung on the evidence of Ryan and Mahaffy, who swore for the sake of getting fifty pounds for every one they hung." His paper does not state how he got off himself, and how he escaped the fate of those who, he says, "were hung innocent, on false evidence."

Forty years passed away since the time of the foregoing occurrences, before the biography of O'Duggan came again into the light; and then, in 1848, he made his appearance in the midst of the great Repeal furry, when men talked of taking to the hills again. Mr. Fitzpatrick, of Dublin, tells how the old man was introduced to Dr. Gray, of the Freeman's Journal, by a member of the Repeal committee, who described him as one of the '98 rebels who could give the doctor some hints on the subject of the United Irishmen, which then engaged the editor's attention.

The doctor gave Barney a small stipend and engaged him to write his personal recollections; but found that he called on him oftener than was necessary, and was far more disposed to talk of the year '43 than of the year '98. At the same time O'Duggan said he was about to engage in some little business, and said he could get twenty pounds in three days from a dozen members of the Repeal Association—naming a number of the Young Irelanders—if he could only carry their names round, in Dr. Gray's handwriting. The doctor declined to write the names, however, and very probably Barney did not get the money, though he certainly got a good deal of sympathy, on account of his age and the recorded battle of Prosperous.

But some of the old documentary evidences were destined to damage O'Duggan as they had damaged Morgan and MacNally before. In that same year, 1843, Dr. Gray, being in Connaught on a visit to his father, went to see the Rev. Joseph Sirr, son of Major Sirr, and rector of Killeoman, who showed his visitor a number of old letters belonging to the major's official life. Among these the doctor discovered some handwritings which he recognized, and which had the signature "D." At last he discovered one—a receipt for money—with the name signed, "B. Duggan." He found that his suspicion was correct, and that he was reading the letters of his old man of '98, addressed to Major Sirr. The Rev. Mr. Sirr said he thought these notes extended over a space of thirty years, and that the writer of them had thirty aliases. Dr. Gray found him writing under several names—at one time personating a priest—at another a pedlar—at another a smuggler. He wrote on one occasion for a hoghead of tobacco; then for £15 to buy a case of pistols. "In one year alone he got £500." Such is the statement of Dr. Gray. Mr. Sirr begged that there might be no exposure of the old man, fearing some one might kill him. The doctor went back to Barney's life; but, on his return to Dublin, let Mr. O'Connell, Thomas Davis, John Figgot, O'Callaghan, and others know what an old rogue they had to deal with, and then prepared to cover O'Duggan with confusion as with a garment, and make him ashamed of himself.

For this purpose he invited Mr. Martin Haverty, the historian, to breakfast, and at the same time introduced the old '98 man, who began to talk very frankly of the pike training of the rebellion, and to recommend the use of it as the only means of redressing the existing evils of the country. He spoke like an ancient "beresark" longing for another good fight before he died. Having listened to all he had to say, for some time, Dr. Gray put on a face of retribution, and exclaimed: "Barney you think I do not know you, though I know you as well as you know yourself. Do you remember when you were dressed as a priest at Dundalk?" The account goes on to state how the doctor taunted him with everything he had learned from the documents, till O'Duggan, in consternation, "lost all self-command, and flung himself at the feet of Dr. Gray, imploring mercy." He asked for twelve hours, after which, he said, he would leave the country. "He tottered from the room, left Ireland and did not return for many years." Such is the account of Mr. Haverty, who was present at the interview; and I suppose it is a true one—though it seems to have a certain wild touch of melodrama in it. Curiously enough, when the old schemer did come back at last, he called on Dr. Gray and made a confession of his former doings. He received some trifling relief, and shortly afterwards died.

If Barney had truly written out the "personal recollections" of his life he would probably have made a very attractive book; for he seems to have been a most resolute and red-handed fellow, full of close contrivances and up to all sorts of strategy. An autograph of Major Sirr found with O'Duggan's notes says that the latter was no doubt the man who shot Mr. Darragh at his own hall door in 1791; and further, that he was the one who shot and nearly killed Mr. Clarke, of Palmerstown, in 1803, when that gentleman was coming home from the Castle. As he fired, he exclaimed: "Where did you come from now?"—a taunt quite in the style of Barney, whose tongue was as free and bold as his hand.

There is a letter in the correspondence of Sir Arthur Wellesley, dated Nenagh, 1803, which Mr. Fitzpatrick supposes to have been from the pen of O'Duggan. It purports to have come from a man sent into the counties of Tipperary and Limerick to inquire respecting the organisation of the "Liberty Rangers." The spy writes: "Assure you I could not find out anything of their secrets, though I have tried every artifice, by avowing myself an enemy to the present Constitution, and even drinking seditious toasts. Still, I could not make head of them anywhere, more than to find that they are actually inclined to rebellion in every quarter of the country through which I have passed."

It is very likely that, if Bernard O'Duggan was the spy and informer his biographers suppose him to have been, he deceived and bamboozled his employers just as much as he circumvented the country people, and invented plots and conspiracies in order to get money for keeping proper watch over them and preserving Ireland for the British crown. His double-faced and underground agency was simply in keeping with all the other actions and influences of that period. Barney was no greater trickster than Castlereagh and a score of other government men; and a philosophical biographer would feel no inclination to treat the poor catfish with any inordinate severity.